

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

VA Grant & Per Diem National Office

Webinar for Operational GPD Grantees January 11, 2022

Recording Link: <https://veteransaffairs.webex.com/recordingservice/sites/veteransaffairs/recording/playback/a684c4ca553e103abfef005056810eb4>

Password: **Homeless!1**



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AGENDA



- Announcements
- Office of Business Oversight
- COVID-19 Updates- Jillian Weber, PhD, RN, CNL
- **Increasing Access to Social Security Disability Benefits: SOAR for Veterans**
- SSVF/GPD Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) packet
- Capital Grant Update



ANNOUNCEMENT





OFFICE OF BUSINESS OVERSIGHT

- **Federal Contractors:**
 - Trilogy, RMA & Associates & BDO
- **Upcoming Fiscal Reviews:**
 - Clara White Mission – January 10-13, 2022
 - Volunteers of America Florida, Inc. – January 18-19, 2022
 - Community Action North Bay – January 19-21, 2022
 - Home of the Brave – January 19-21, 2022
 - The Transition House, Inc. – January 20-21, 2022
 - The Salvation Army, Inc. – January 31 – February 2, 2022
 - Volunteers of America of Greater Ohio, Inc. – January 31 – February 2, 2022
 - Washington State Department of Veteran Affairs – January 31 – February 2, 2022
 - Volunteers of America of Indiana, Inc. – February 3-4, 2022
 - Talbert House – February 14-17, 2022
 - Center for Veterans Issues, Ltd. – February 14-17, 2022
 - Housing Authority of Salt Lake City – February 15-17, 2022
- **SF-425's due on 1/31/2022**
 - ***NEW*** SF-425 Fillable Form Link: <https://forms.office.com/r/JNSVnng5g8>
 - Please Submit the SF-425 and Supporting Documentation to GPD425@va.gov with the grantees' FAIN in the subject line.
- **OBO's reflection on FY 2021 CARES Reviews**
 - Significant Findings: Unobligated Funds
 - Potential Future Training

COVID-19 Updates

January 2022

Jillian Weber, PhD, RN, CNL

Homeless PACT National Program Manager | COVID-19 Response Team

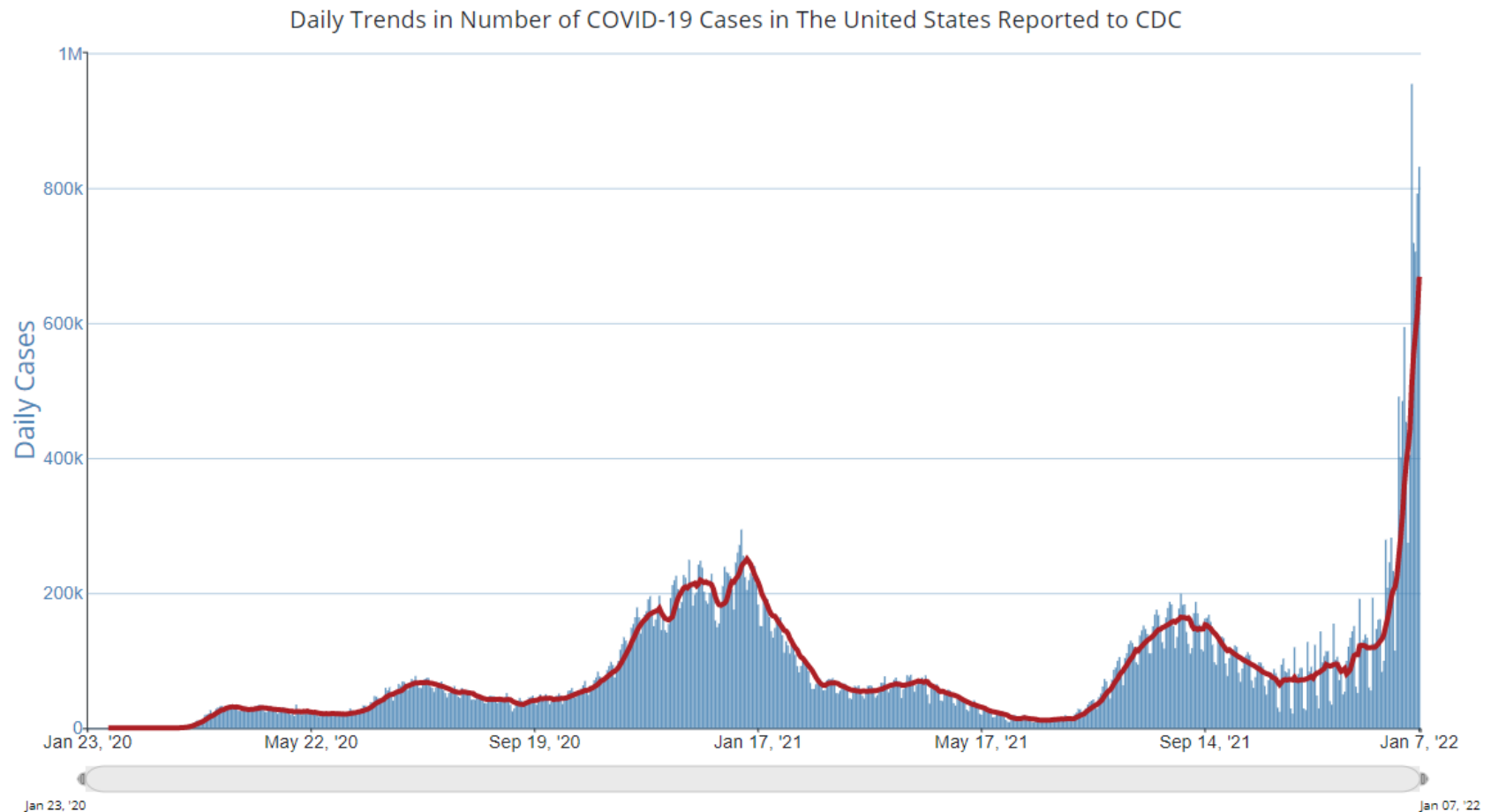
VHA Homeless Programs Office

COVID-19 Vaccine Updates

- **COVID-19 booster doses**

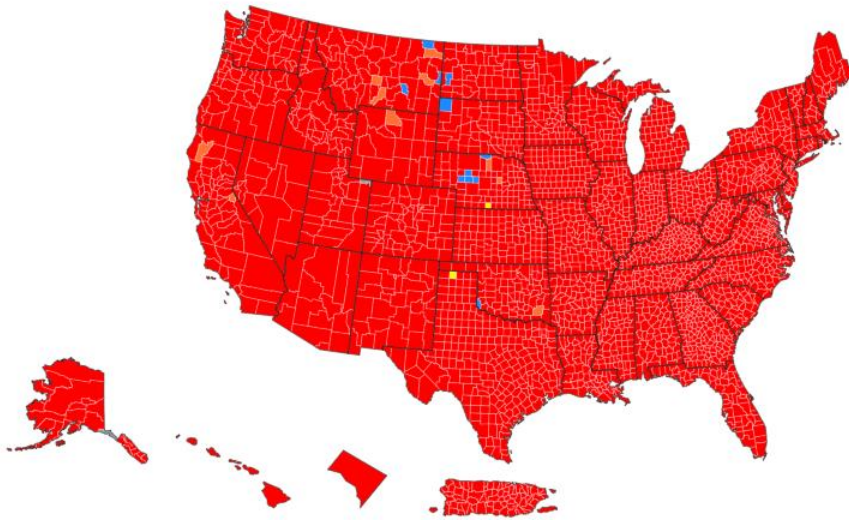
- Purpose of booster shot is to “boost” antibody protection when it has decreased over time.
- Booster **recommended** for everyone 12 and older
- Pfizer, Moderna, and Janssen/J&J all have EUA for boosters
- Who is eligible?
 - Pfizer and 12+, get booster 5 months after last dose
 - Moderna and 18+, get booster 5 months (voted 1/7, previously 6 months) after last dose
 - Janssen/J&J and 18+, get booster 2 months post vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna preferred)
- Where to get booster?
 - No cost
 - Both within VA and outside locations
 - [Find VA locations](#)
 - Find COVID-19 Vaccines: [Vaccines.gov](#)

COVID-19 Updates – CDC Data



*[CDC COVID-19 Data Tracker](#)

COVID-19 Updates – Community Transmission



Community Transmission in US by County

| | Total | Percent | % Change |
|-------------|-------|---------|----------|
| High | 3197 | 99.22% | 3.35% |
| Substantial | 11 | 0.34% | -1.74% |
| Moderate | 1 | 0.03% | -0.84% |
| Low | 10 | 0.31% | -0.78% |

How is community transmission calculated?

● High ● Substantial ● Moderate ● Low ● No Data

Current 7-days is Sun Jan 02 2022 - Sat Jan 08 2022 for case rate and Fri Dec 31 2021 - Thu Jan 06 2022 for percent positivity. The percent change in counties at each level of transmission is the absolute change compared to the previous 7-day period.

*[CDC COVID-19 Level of Community Transmission](#)

COVID-19 Updates: Quarantine & Isolation

- **Quarantine**
 - Strategy used to prevent transmission of COVID-19 by keeping people who have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 apart from others.
- **Isolation**
 - Used to separate people with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 from those without COVID-19.
- **Up-to-date** with vaccinations
 - CDC recommends people remain up to date with their vaccines which includes additional doses (immunocompromised) or booster doses at regular time points.
 - **Fully vaccinated** definition has not changed at this time.

*[CDC Quarantine and Isolation](#)

Quarantine Guidance for General Population

IF YOU
Were exposed to COVID-19 and are NOT [up-to-date](#) on COVID-19 vaccinations

Quarantine for at least 5 days

Stay home

Stay home and [quarantine](#) for at least 5 full days.

Wear a well-fitted mask if you must be around others in your home.

Get tested

Even if you don't develop symptoms, get tested at least 5 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19.

IF YOU
Were exposed to COVID-19 and are [up-to-date](#) with vaccination OR had confirmed COVID-19 within the past 90 days (you tested positive using a viral test)

No quarantine

You do not need to stay home **unless** you develop symptoms.

Get tested

Even if you don't develop symptoms, get tested at least 5 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19

After quarantine

Watch for symptoms

Watch for symptoms until 10 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19.

If you develop symptoms

[Isolate](#) immediately and get tested. Continue to stay home until you know the results. Wear a well-fitted mask around others.

Watch for symptoms

Watch for symptoms until 10 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19.

If you develop symptoms

[Isolate](#) immediately and get tested. Continue to stay home until you know the results. Wear a well-fitted mask around others.

Take precautions until day 10

Wear a mask

Wear a well-fitted mask for 10 full days any time you are around others inside your home or in public. Do not go to places where you are unable to wear a mask.

Avoid travel

Avoid being around people who are at high risk

Take precautions until day 10

Wear a mask

Wear a well-fitted mask for 10 full days any time you are around others inside your home or in public. Do not go to places where you are unable to wear a mask.

Avoid travel

Avoid being around people who are at high risk



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Isolation Guidance for General Population

**IF YOU
Tested positive
for COVID-19 or
have
symptoms,
regardless of
vaccination
status**

Stay home for at least 5 days

Stay home for 5 days and [isolate](#) from others in your home.

Wear a well-fitted mask if you must be around others in your home.

Ending isolation if you had symptoms

[End isolation after 5 full days](#) if you are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication) and your symptoms are improving.

Ending isolation if you did NOT have symptoms

[End isolation after at least 5 full days](#) after your positive test.

If you were severely ill with COVID-19

You should isolate for at least 10 days. [Consult your doctor before ending isolation.](#)

Take precautions until day 10

Wear a mask

Wear a well-fitted mask for 10 full days any time you are around others inside your home or in public. Do not go to places where you are unable to wear a mask.

Avoid travel

Avoid being around people who are at high risk



Quarantine & Isolation Guidance for High-Risk Congregate Settings

- **High-risk congregate settings**
 - High-risk of secondary transmission
 - Homeless shelter, correctional facilities, cruise ships
- **Quarantine**
 - ***10-day quarantine period*** for residents regardless of vaccination status
- **Isolation**
 - ***10-day isolation period*** for residents

COVID-19 Updates: How to Protect Yourself

- **Get vaccinated** (COVID-19, boosters, influenza)
 - Breakthrough infections
 - Omicron has been shown to infect people previously infected as well as people who have been vaccinated and boosted.
 - However, the vaccine continues to show effectiveness in reducing the risk of moderate to severe illness (i.e., hospitalization and death).
- Wear a mask
- Social distancing (stay 6 feet from others)
- Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces
- Frequent handwashing
- Cover coughs and sneezes

[*CDC How to Protect Yourself & Others](#)



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GPD PER DIEM AND MOTEL/HOTELS

- REMINDER:

- GPD grantees may continue to use [motel/hotels](#) to support isolation, quarantine, and individual living spaces for Veterans
 - To use hotel/motel space, grantees must have a plan to check on Veterans daily (remote or virtual contact is allowed) for wellness checks, to provide support services, and to facilitate meals
- Per diem rate changes (increase/decrease) may be requested at any point
 - Maximum for TH is \$152.73; service centers is \$19.09/hr
 - Rate changes requested through SmartSimple
 - [Per Diem Rate Modification How-to Guide](#)

Increasing Access to Social Security Disability Benefits: SOAR for Veterans

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
(SAMHSA) SOAR Technical Assistance Center
Policy Research Associates, Inc.





Kristin Lupfer, Project Director
SAMHSA SOAR TA Center



Jen Elder, Senior Advisor
SAMHSA SOAR TA Center

SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Overview

Kristin Lupfer, Project Director, SAMHSA SOAR TA Center

Disclaimer

The views, opinions, and content expressed in this presentation do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or policies of the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Purpose and Objectives

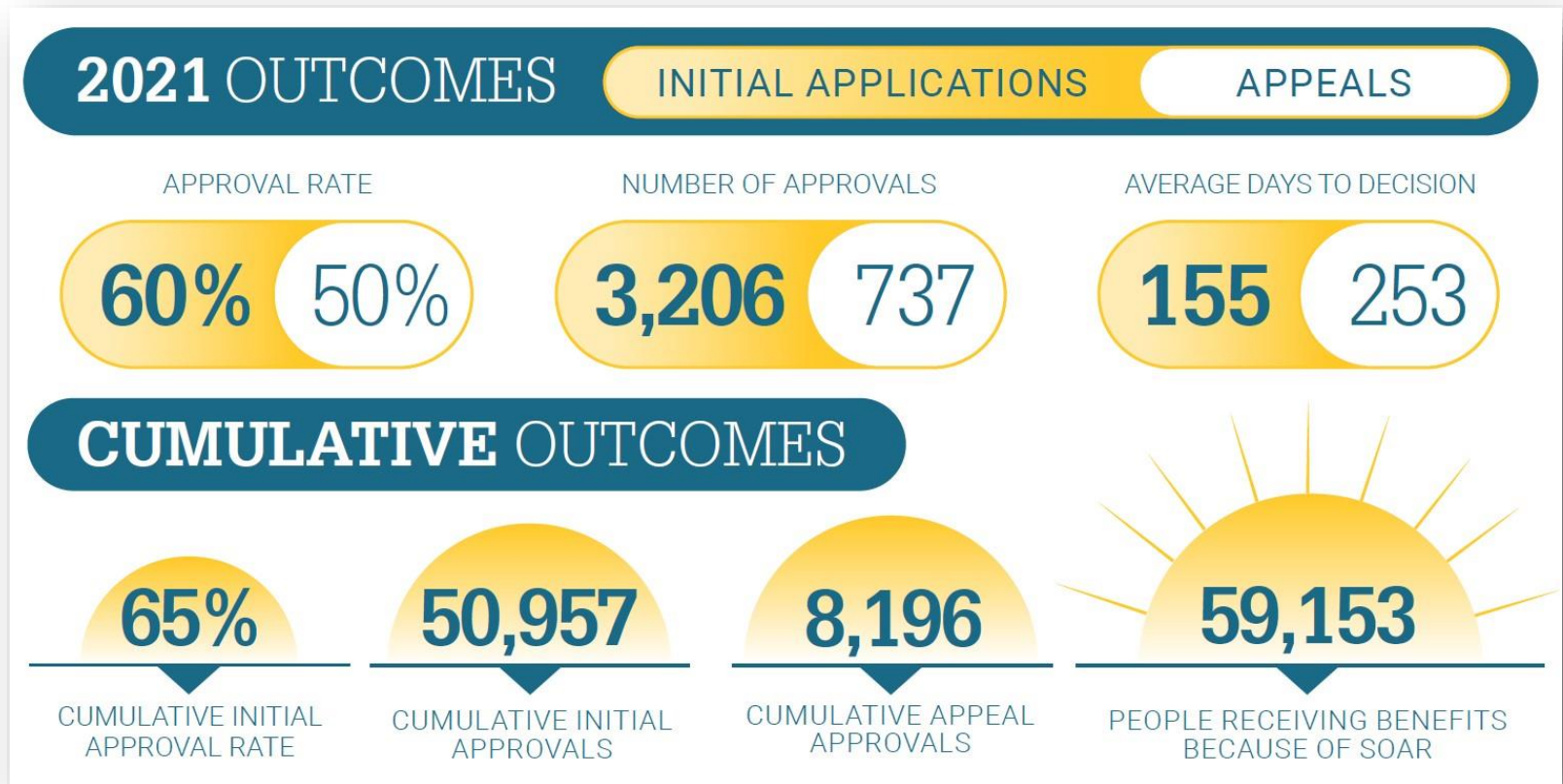
- Identify the benefits of using the SOAR model to serve Veterans
- Provide an overview of SSI/SSDI and documenting disability
- Discuss income maximization and combining SSI/SSDI with other income sources
- Explore Veterans Affairs (VA) and SOAR Resources
- Access SOAR training and connect with local SOAR contacts

What is SOAR?



- A model for assisting eligible adults and children to apply for Social Security Administration (SSA) disability benefits
- For individuals who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a serious mental illness, co-occurring substance use disorder, or other physical disabilities
- Sponsored by SAMHSA in collaboration with the Social Security Administration (SSA) since 2005
- All 50 states and Washington, DC currently participate

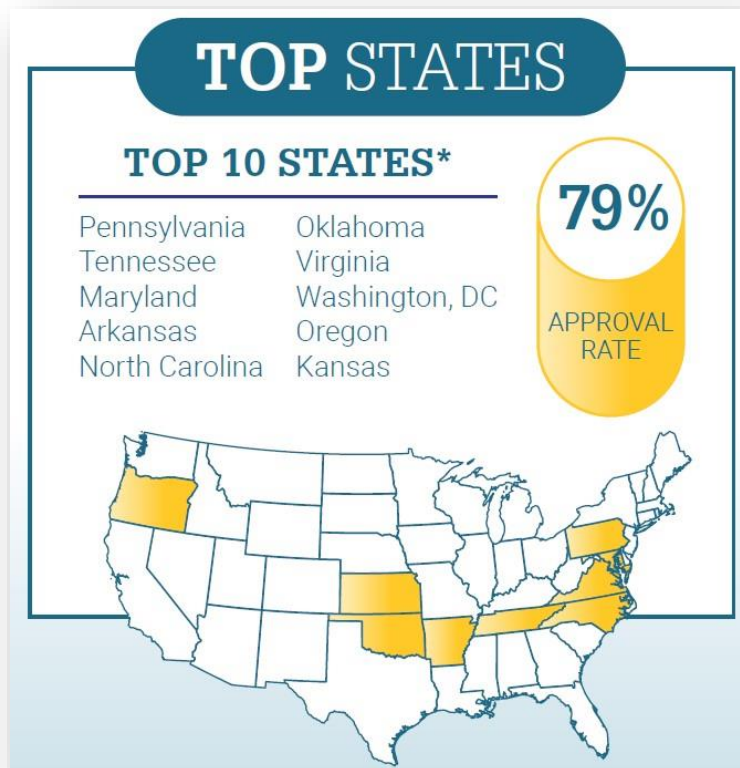
SOAR Works!



*National SOAR outcomes as of June 30, 2021

<https://soarworks.prainc.com/article/soar-outcomes-and-impact>

SOAR Super Stars!



SOAR Critical Components

Using these five SOAR Critical Components, case workers play a central role in gathering complete, targeted, and relevant information for SSA and DDS, resulting in high-quality SSI/SSDI applications. These components significantly increase the likelihood of an approval for those who are eligible.

1. Serving as the Applicant's Representative
2. Collecting and Submitting Medical Records
3. Writing and Submitting a Medical Summary Report (MSR)
4. Obtaining a Co-signature on the MSR by an Acceptable Medical Source
5. Completing a Quality Review of Applications Prior to Submission

*Inclusion: Highest cumulative approval rates on initial application for states with at least 350 cumulative decisions, at least 24 decisions in 2021 (2 per month), and a 2021 approval rate above the national average. **Combined, these states had 22,510 decisions**

Importance of SSI/SSDI for Veterans

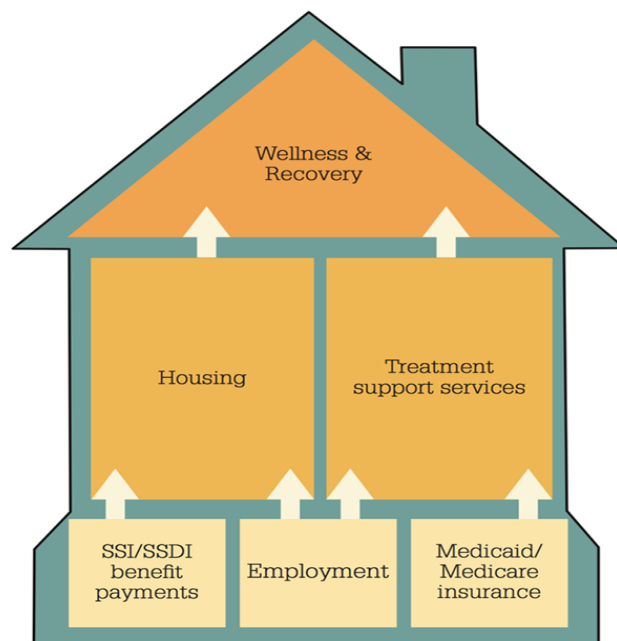
- SSA disability benefits can provide access to:
 - ***Income***: Veterans can receive Supplemental Security Income/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSI/SSDI) in conjunction with, or as an alternative to, VA disability benefits
 - ***Health insurance***: Veterans can use the Medicaid and Medicare health benefits that come with SSI/SSDI to supplement VA health services
- For Veterans with disabilities, SSI/SSDI can increase income and housing stability, and reduce their future risk of homelessness
- Opportunity for staff serving Veterans to help with both SSA and VA disability benefits

A Foundation for Recovery and Resiliency

More Than Income

- Access to health care and housing
- Increased education and employment opportunities
- Decrease in incarcerations, institutionalization, and hospitalizations

SSI/SSDI: One Brick in Foundation



SSI and SSDI: The Basics

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

- Eligibility based on need: low income and resources; living arrangement
- Monthly amount based on Federal Benefit Rate: \$841/month (2022) (2021: \$794) *
- Date of eligibility based on Protective Filing Date/Application Date
- Health insurance: Medicaid

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

- Eligibility based on insured status (FICA payments)
- Monthly amount based on earnings history
- Date of eligibility based on “date of onset” of disability, 5 month waiting period
- Health insurance: Medicare

SSA's Definition of Disability for Adults

- The inability to engage in any *substantial gainful activity (SGA)* \$1,350/month (2022)
- By reason of any *medically determinable* physical or mental *impairment(s)*
- Which can be expected to result in death or which has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months.

How GPD Providers Can Help

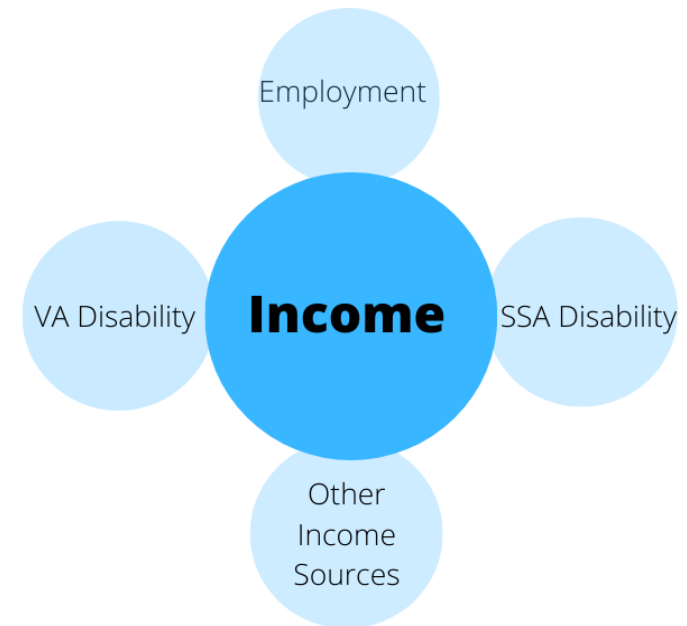
- Connect the Veteran to health care
 - Arrange for mental health and medical evaluations
 - Gather medical records in support of SSI/SSDI application
- Documenting disability
 - Your documentation of the Veteran's symptoms and limitations in daily activities, social interactions, and concentration supports the SSI/SSDI application

Income Maximization and Connecting with Resources

Jen Elder, Senior Advisor, SAMHSA SOAR TA Center

Income Maximization

- SSI/SSDI can work **in combination** with other income sources to support the Veteran/Veteran family in securing income and housing stability
- Veterans may be eligible to receive both SSA and VA disability benefits
- Employment is possible and encouraged while applying for and receiving disability benefits



VA Income and Benefits Calculator

- Designed to encourage individuals to utilize SSA work incentives to maximize their income
- Includes separate calculators for SSI and SSDI beneficiaries
- Provides a visual and calculated representation of how increasing income from employment or other benefits will affect overall income.

SSI Calculator: Employment and Unearned Income

To estimate total gross monthly income, fill in the box below using monthly amounts:

| | |
|--|--|
| | Unearned Income (VA or state benefits, etc.) |
| | Gross Monthly Wages (before taxes) |
| | Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS) |
| | Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWEs) |

Unearned Income

| | |
|---------------|---|
| \$0.00 | Unearned Income (VA benefits, state benefits, etc.) |
| -\$20.00 | General Income Exclusion |
| \$0.00 | Total Countable Unearned Income |

Earned Income from Wages

| | |
|---|---|
| \$0.00 | Gross Monthly Wages (before taxes) |
| -\$65.00 | Earned Income Exclusion |
| -\$20.00 | Any remaining General Income Exclusion |
| \$0.00 | PASS Plan |
| \$0.00 | Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWEs) |
| \$0.00 | Gross wages, after subtracting exclusions |
| + 2 Divide by 2 (SSA counts \$1 for every \$2 earned) | |
| \$0.00 | Total Countable Earned Income |

\$0.00 Total Countable Income (Unearned + Earned)

Calculating SSI Benefit Amount

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| \$771.00 | SSI Federal Benefit Rate (\$771 in 2019) |
| \$0.00 | Add an SSI State Supplement (if applicable) |
| \$0.00 | Total Countable Income |
| \$771.00 | SSI Benefit Check |


Calculating Gross Monthly Wages

| | |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| \$0.00 | Hourly Pay |
| 0.00 | Hours Worked (monthly) |
| \$0.00 | Gross Monthly Wages (pre-tax) |

Total Monthly Income (Before Taxes)

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| \$0.00 | Unearned Income |
| \$0.00 | Gross Monthly Wages |
| \$771.00 | SSI Benefit Check |
| \$771.00 | Total Gross Monthly Income |

Total Monthly Income (Before Taxes)



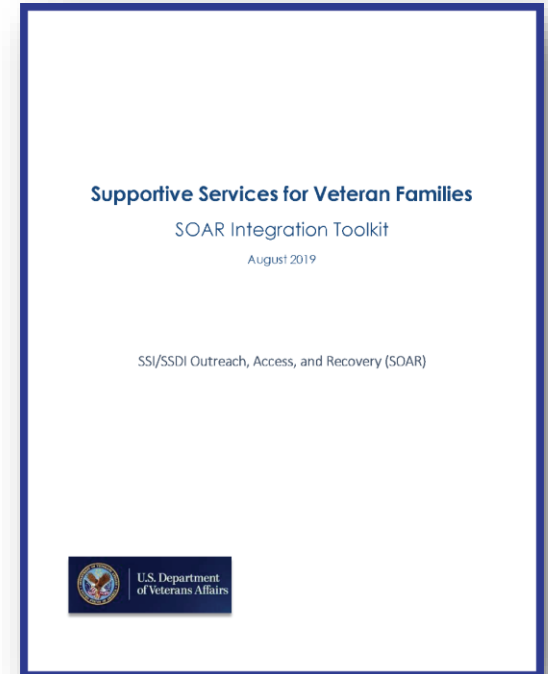
■ Unearned Income
■ Gross Monthly Wages
■ SSI Benefit Check

Note: This calculator is for estimating income only. The Social Security Administration will make the official determination when you report your unearned income and wages.

<https://soarworks.prainc.com/article/income-benefits-calculator>

VA SOAR Integration Toolkit

- Helpful guide to review:
 - SSI/SSDI eligibility criteria
 - SSA work incentives
 - Combining income streams
 - Collaborating with other community programs
 - Connecting with SOAR State and Local Leads



<https://soarworks.prainc.com/article/ssvf-soar-integration-toolkit>

How GPD Grantees Can Help

- Explore all potential income sources with the Veteran, along with eligibility criteria
 - Connect the Veteran with disability application assistance and employment supports
- Use the VA Income and Benefits Calculator to start discussions about income maximization
 - Connect the Veteran with a benefits planner
 - SSA: Ticket to Work – <https://choosework.ssa.gov>
 - VA: VSOs and Regional Benefits Office

Benefits of the SOAR Online Course




SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Online Course: Adult Curriculum

- Standardized training provided across all geographic areas
- SOAR Leaders can coordinate follow-up training and support
- Course is FREE, web-based, and self-guided
- 20 CEUs from National Association of Social Workers (NASW)

Getting Involved: Time Commitment

- Training: 20 hours
- 20-40 hours per complete application
- SOAR Critical Components
- Outcome Tracking
- Benefit to Your Agency and the Individuals You Serve



Getting Involved with SOAR
You want to be a SOAR provider? That's great! Here's what to expect.

SOAR promotes recovery and wellness through increased access to Social Security disability benefits for eligible individuals who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a serious mental illness, medical impairment, and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder. SOAR providers assist individuals with complete and quality applications. This is not an easy task, and we want to be sure that you understand the commitment required – we believe it is well worth the effort!

Training
The SOAR Online Course trains providers to assist individuals with the Social Security disability application process. The course includes an Adult Curriculum for assisting with Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) claims for adults and a Child Curriculum for assisting with SSI claims for children.

- The SOAR Online Course: Adult and Child Curriculums are free and are located on the SOARWorks website (<https://soarworks.praire.com/content/soar-online-course-catalog>).
- Each curriculum consists of seven classes, each of which has a series of articles, short quizzes, and a practice case component. The practice case provides an opportunity for trainees to apply what they have learned in the course by completing a sample application packet for a fictitious applicant using SOAR techniques.
- It takes approximately 20 hours to complete each curriculum and participants can work at their own pace, starting and stopping as they wish. However, we encourage students to complete the curriculum within 30 days to retain the information learned.
- Upon successful completion, participants will receive 20 CEUs (continuing education units) from the National Association of Social Workers (NASW).

Many SOAR Local Leads offer one-day SOAR Online Course Review Sessions to review key components of the curriculum, discuss local/state practices, and connect new providers to local Social Security Administration (SSA) and DDS (Disability Determination Services) offices.

Time Commitment
We estimate that each SOAR application will take approximately 20-40 hours to complete, from initial engagement to receiving a decision on a claim. This generally occurs over the course of 60-90 days.

- The time spent on each application will vary depending on the amount of engagement that is needed as well as other variables such as the experience level of the SOAR worker. For example, engagement with an applicant who is residing in an institution may take 20 hours, while it may take longer to connect with someone who is living outside or difficult to contact.

SOAR Critical Components
SOAR providers with higher approval rates credit their success to implementing the SOAR critical components³ and submitting high quality applications. Use of these components significantly increases the

Oh, the Support You Will Receive!

SOAR TA Center Activities and Support



SOAR Online Course



SOAR Leadership Academy



SOAR Online Application Tracking (OAT) Program



SOARWorks Library



Individual Technical Assistance



SOARing Over Lunch

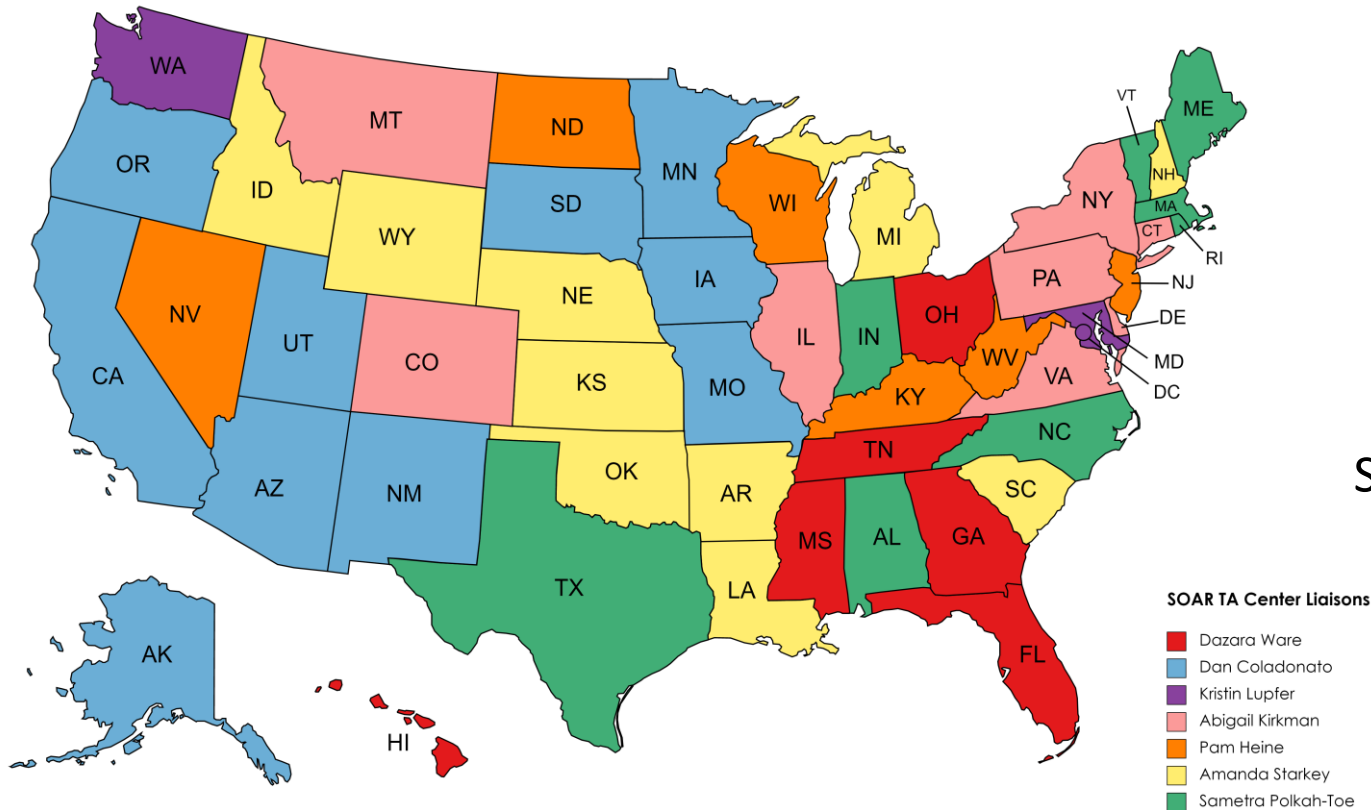


SOAR eNews



Bi-Monthly Webinars

Connect with SOAR in Your State



Connect with
your state's
SAMHSA SOAR
TA Center
Liaison!

<https://soarworks.prainc.com/directory>

Additional Resources

- SOAR Works Website and Online Course: <https://soarworks.prainc.com/>
- SOAR and Veterans: <https://soarworks.prainc.com/topics/veterans>
- SSA Disability Information: <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability/>
- SSA Employment Supports: <https://choosework.ssa.gov/>

Thank You

SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

<https://soarworks.prainc.com>

soar@prainc.com

www.samhsa.gov

1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) • 1-800-487-4889 (TDD)



GPD SSVF TFA REFERRAL PACKET

This packet is for Veterans exiting a GPD Transitional Housing project or for those in a GPD Case Management program who need one-time temporary financial assistance (TFA).

The packet must be used by GPD staff when seeking one-time TFA for Veterans who would remain homeless “but for” seeking this SSVF assistance.

Eligible TFA includes:

- Security deposits
- Utility deposits
- General housing stability assistance (outlined in packet) on a case-by-case basis



GPD Provider Training & Resources

FAQ

NEW GPD Referral Packet for SSVF TFA 

Service Centers 

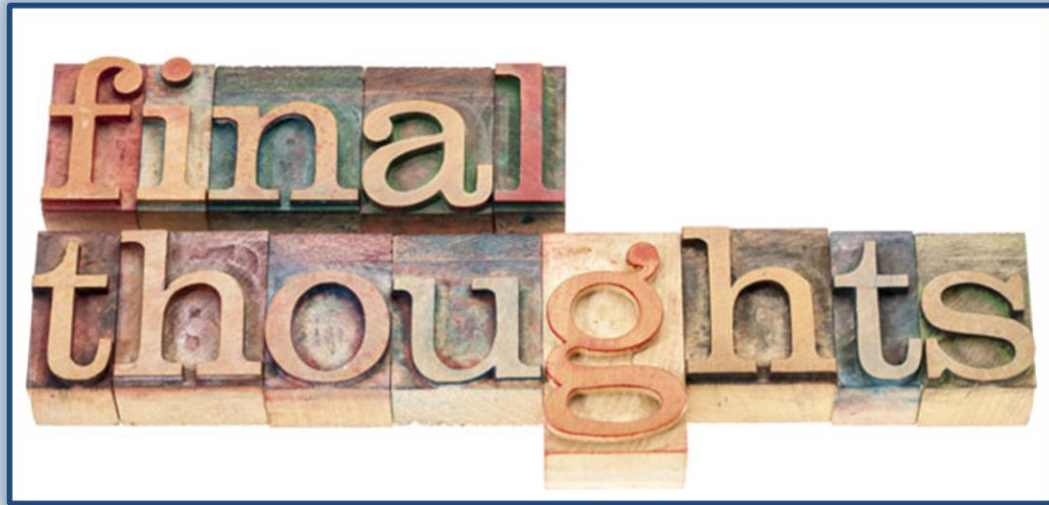
Medication Storage 

**Please note SSVF grantees are not required to serve Veterans from GPD and may ask the VA to prioritize referrals if TFA funds become limited.*



FY 2022 CAPITAL GRANT UPDATE

- Applications due December 6, 2021
- Threshold and initial application reviews completed
- Conditional selection notifications anticipated by the end of the week
 - Conditional selection is **not** a guarantee of funding
 - In some cases, the Proposed Award may be different than what your organization requested
 - Instructions in the email regarding the requirement to submit an updated [SF 424](#) with your signed grant agreement
 - Notifications will be sent via email from SmartSimple (noreply@udpaas.com)
 - Make sure contacts in SmartSimple are current
 - [How-to Update SmartSimple Contacts](#)
 - Approximately 2 weeks to submit the signed grant agreement via SmartSimple
 - [How to Submit Signed Grant Agreement via SmartSimple](#)



Next Call: Tuesday, February 8, 2022 at 2pm EST